First record of the Brush-tailed Phascogale *Phascogale tapoatafa* in the Australian Capital Territory

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In 1994 predator scats were collected along roads and among rocky outcrops in Namadgi National Park and the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve (Connolly 1995). Namadgi (106 000 ha) is located in the south-west of the ACT and Tidbinbilla (5500 ha) adjoins Namadgi to the north-east (Wright *et al.* 1996). The altitude in Namadgi ranges from 650 - 1910 m and in Tidbinbilla it ranges from 700 - 1561 m.

Scat analysis was conducted on 441 dog, fox and cat scats. This involved microscopic and macroscopic examination of the hair, bone, teeth, feathers, reptile and insect remains in the faeces to identify the prey/carrion consumed by the carnivores (Triggs 1996). The presence of hair swallowed during grooming may also enable the carnivore to be identified (Triggs 1996).

Brush-tailed Phascogale *Phascogale tapoatafa* hair was identified in two scats collected within a one km section of the Cotter Hut Road in Namadgi at an altitude of between 1130 m and 1240 m. A jaw, complete with teeth, was also found in one of these scats. The jaw and teeth were taken to CSIRO Wildlife and Ecology (ACT) where it was compared with museum specimens and its identification confirmed by Mr. P. Catling. The forest associations in the immediate area are characterised by the presence of *Eucalyptus dalrympleana* together with a range of other species, including *E. pauciflora*, *E. robertsonii* and *E. dives*. The western section of the road on which the scats were found grades into communities associated with swamps and bogs (National Capital Development Commission 1983).

The two scats containing the remains of Brush-tailed Phascogale were identified as possibly dog scats, or owl pellets. No dog hair was present, so the identification was based on size, shape and colour only.

Descriptions of the distribution of the Brush-tailed Phascogale include its presence in south-eastern Australia (Maxwell *et al.* 1996; Soderquist 1995), but there are no previous records of its occurrence in the ACT (M. Lintermans, ACT Parks & Conservation Service, pers. comm., 1996). The occurrence of the Brush-tailed Phascogale in the ACT is significant in view of the fact that the species is now listed as 'Vulnerable' in New South Wales (*Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*) and 'Threatened' in Victoria (*Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*).

Since this record, Brush-tailed Phascogale hair has been found in two fox scats collected in the Orroral Valley in Namadgi National Park (Banks 1997).

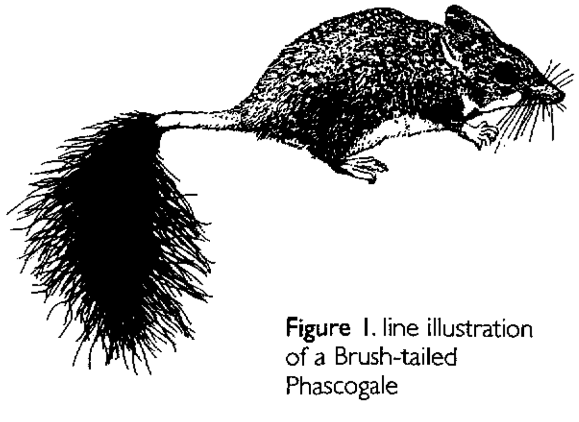

Figure 1. line illustration of a Brush-tailed Phascogale

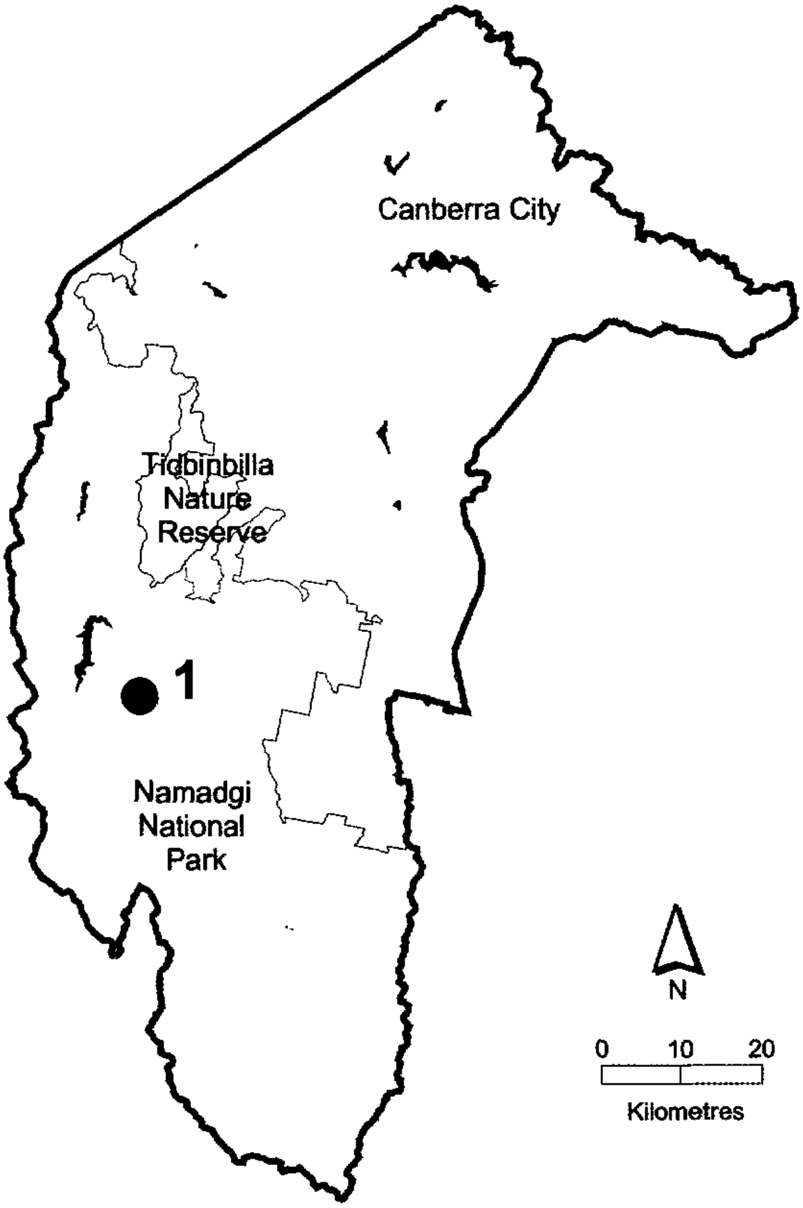

Figure 2. location of predator scats containing Brush-tailed Phascogale hair and jaw

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